# PRAIRIE WARRIOR 98:

# Building 21st-Century Leaders

**Colonel Jon H. Moilanen, US Army**

***PRAIRIE WARRIOR (PW)* has served as the capstone exercise for US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) students since 1991. As the Army's premier university for tactical- and operational-level warfare studies, CGSC is the intellectual heart and soul of our tactical field Army. Linked to the Army's Battle Command Training Program and Advanced Warfighting Experiments, *PW* is shaping both Force XXI and the officers who will lead it. This article will discuss *PW 98* lessons learned and offer insight for this year's exercise focus.**

TRAINING LEADERS for the rigors of military leadership in today's complex environment spotlights the charter of the US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. *PRAIRIE WARRIOR* (*PW*), the Command and General Staff Officer Course's (CGSOC's) capstone exercise, signals the "Leavenworth Experience" as an institutional pillar of Army training and education. CGSC has become the Army's premier university for tactical and operational levels of warfare and is the intellectual heart and soul of our tactical field Army.

Because worldwide challenges dictate a focus on a national security strategy of engagement which contributes to global stability and prosperity in the 21st century, visible force of well-trained, professional soldiers demonstrates a credible means of US resolve to defend its policies. Today, the US Army maintains a full-spectrum force—a capabilities-based force—a trained and ready force during an increasing number of operational deployments with a wide variety of missions and contingencies.[1] Education at CGSC prepares leaders for diverse operations ranging from humanitarian assistance, through peace operations, up to and including high-intensity conflict.

The *PW* exercise evolved from an initial testbed course in 1989 that focused on large-scale combined arms operations and inherent tactical command and control ($C^2$) issues.[2] The new era of strategic change challenged CGSC to develop a relevant capstone exercise. International events included major global and regional power shifts in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, while US vital interests in the Pacific Rim

became more obvious to the American public. The congressional mandate of downsizing the US Armed Forces strained an ever-increasing commitment of US military presence in allied, coalition and unilateral contingencies around the world.

Formally implemented as a college command post exercise (CPX) in 1991, *PW* objectives assessed functional CP responsibilities, leadership skills and conduct of joint and combined operations.[3] CGSC increased faculty and student participation through the School for Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) and the Army War College Fellows of the Advanced Operational Art Studies Fellowship (AOASF). Participation by CGSC international exchange students and operational unit members complemented a multinational perspective of large-scale operations within a campaign and accented a multinational joint exercise. Student learning objectives expanded to a more detailed study of battlefield functions in joint and combined operations.

***PW objectives assessed functional CP responsibilities, leadership skills and conduct of joint and combined operations. CGSC increased faculty and student participation through the SAMS and the Army War College Fellows of the AOASF. Participation by CGSC international exchange students and operational unit members complemented a multinational perspective of large-scale operations within a campaign and accented a multinational joint exercise.***

## Advanced Warfighting Experiments (AWEs)

By 1994, *PW* witnessed a major evolution of purpose. The CPX led a major CGSC venue of selected US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) battle laboratory excursions and incorporated specific issues of the Army's Louisiana Maneuvers Task Force (LAM TF). Additionally, areas of interest supported Phase III of the Army's General Headquarters Exercise. Initiatives such as the *Mobile Strike Force* examined possible future warfighting concepts and organizational structure. The next three years included increasing involvement within the AWEs as the Army investigated issues such as battlefield visualization, new combat service support concepts, synthetic theater of war (STOW) technologies and emerging technologies to improve command, control and intelligence ($C^2I$) integration. In 1997, *PW* supported division AWE digitization issues and started to shift focus to CGSOC student learning objectives that emphasized execution of tactical and operational orders.

## PW 98

Learning objectives in *PW 98* centered on developing the abilities to plan, conduct and sustain joint and multinational combined arms operations. Emphasis remained at the corps and division levels of a combined and joint task force (CJTF). Joint force employment explored the synergy of service and functional component combat power at the tactical and operational levels of war, and students gained an appreciation for digitization and the Army Battle Command System's (ABCS's) capabilities. Leaders experienced $C^2$'s potential and limitations in organizations with digitized and nondigitized units. Similarly, leaders were exposed to multinational differences in $C^2$ procedures.

A core of selected students practiced identifying critical intelligence in a quantum increase of information and exercised rapid decision-making initiative. Many of these officers will report to units undergoing major digitization initiatives at Fort Hood, Texas, and III Corps. Feedback from digitization experiments indicates these staff officers are well prepared to succeed in the tempo and speed of digitized operations. Even with the advantage of improved situational understanding through

digitization, observations demonstrate the requirement for a commander to issue clear, concise and easily understood intent. Focused technology improves leader situational understanding and the ability to visualize mission success and follow-on operations. To exploit the capabilities of near real-time intelligence or predictive indicators, leaders need practiced cognitive skills to think creatively and act decisively.

During *PW 98*, the US Army Research Laboratory and US Army Research Institute observed the impact of digitization on the military decision-making process (MDMP). Insights indicate several areas for dedicated study in support of battlefield visualization and synchronization including:

- Specific cognitive frameworks for improved rapid decision making.
- Redefined functional responsibilities in $C^2$ nodes to support the commander.
- Improved tools for simultaneous and parallel commander and staff actions.
- A focused time-sensitive process to enhance the commander's windows of decision-making opportunity.

***In* PW 98 . . . *students gained an appreciation for digitization and the Army Battle Command System's capabilities. Leaders experienced $C^2$'s potential and limitations in organizations with digitized and nondigitized units. Similarly, leaders were exposed to multinational differences in $C^2$ procedures.***

The *PW 98* scenario confronted the notional Pacific Rim countries of Pacifica and Surran. Operations spanned low- through high-intensity conflict. The January-February 1998 issue of *Military Review* provides an overview of the *PW 98* multinational task organization, mission focus and educational focus. The four primary learning tasks were:

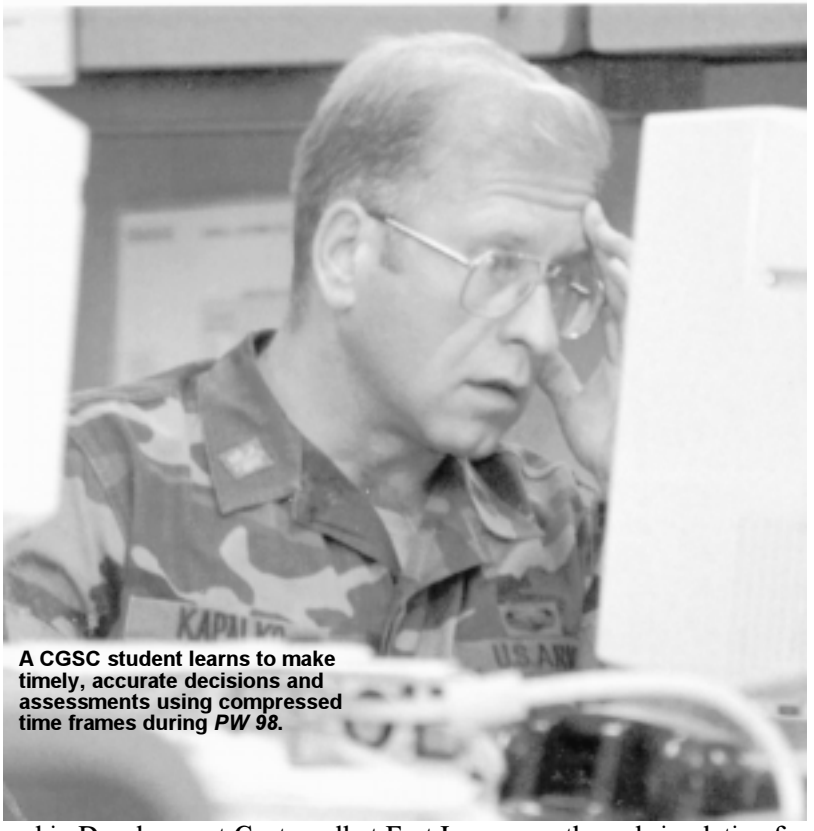
- Conduct joint and multinational combined arms operations and sustainment with emphasis at the corps land component command (LCC) and division levels of a CJTF.
- Conduct US Army doctrinal decision-making and joint planning and execution processes in a complex environment.
- Conduct, from a service component perspective, joint force employment at the operational and tactical levels of war.
- Demonstrate the Joint Training Confederation (JTC) of simulations and Battle Command Training Program (BCTP) methodology to support CGSOC educational objectives.

## Simulations in Leader Development

Constructive simulations are powerful tools and the most effective means for training commanders and staffs of division and larger units. Training effectiveness improves through stressful training evaluated just as rigorously as a US Army Warfighter exercise. JTC and *SPECTRUM* simulations create a challenging simulation environment. Corps Battle Simulation (CBS) provides a primary scenario simulation within the JTC. Students confront practical complexities that stress military combined and joint operations with concurrent political, economical, sociological and other civil impacts.

During *PW 98*, Fort Leavenworth connected US and multinational participants through constructive simulations and distributed communications among local and nationwide training facilities. The US Air Force distributed the Air Warfare Simulation (AWSIM) to the JTC simulations and portrayed a Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) from the US Air Force's Command and Control Tactical Innovation Center ($C^2$TIC) at Hurlburt Field, Florida. The CAOC linked with a CAOC (Forward) at Fort Leavenworth. LCC operations emanated from several locations: the National Simulation Center (NSC), CGSC digitized laboratories, the Army National Guard's 35th Infantry Division Lead-

Tyler Wirken



A CGSC student learns to make timely, accurate decisions and assessments using compressed time frames during *PW 98*.

***Even with the advantage of improved situational understanding through digitization, observations demonstrate the requirement for a commander to issue clear, concise and easily understood intent. . . . To exploit the capabilities of near real-time intelligence or predictive indicators, leaders need practiced cognitive skills to think creatively and act decisively.***

ership Development Center, all at Fort Leavenworth, and simulation facilities at Fort Lee, Virginia, used by the 310th Theater Support Command (TSC) (Provisional), a US Army Reserve unit.

## Multiple Axes to Excellence

*PW* promotes many key issues in an educational laboratory to a broad military community in digital initiatives and other complex 21st-century issues, including the following:

**Joint education linkage.** Applying Army and joint doctrine, training in digital $C^2$ laboratories and exercising with constructive simulations immerse leaders in near-simultaneous planning and execution decision making. Parallel planning and execution are norms of successful continuous operations. Speed through digitization improves the effects of these parallel and simultaneous processes. Command and staff functions focus on maintaining a relevant common picture and exploiting situational understanding to mass decisive combat power on an opposing force (OPFOR).

**ABCS integration.** Officers gain an appreciation for digitization as a force multiplier and understand ABCS's $C^2$ potential. *PW* signals the only annual TRADOC event that sustains an institutional training linkage among the ABCS elements and the Army's CGSOC field grade officers. The exercise demonstrates the $C^2$ challenges in organizations with digitized and nondigitized units, as well as the different $C^2$ challenges within an alliance or coalition.

**JTC software validation.** *PW* provides a venue for the standing NSC requirement to validate software upgrades and the JTC simulations under operational-load conditions. Historically, this setting includes iterative digitized laboratory training, two simulation exercises (SIMEXs) preceding the CPX and the culminating *PW* exercise. Validation confirms the end-to-end threads among ABCS elements and the fidelity of simulations such as CBS. In *PW 98*, the NSC examined a new interface stimulation, Run Time Manager, between the JTC simulations and ABCS.


Tyler Wirken

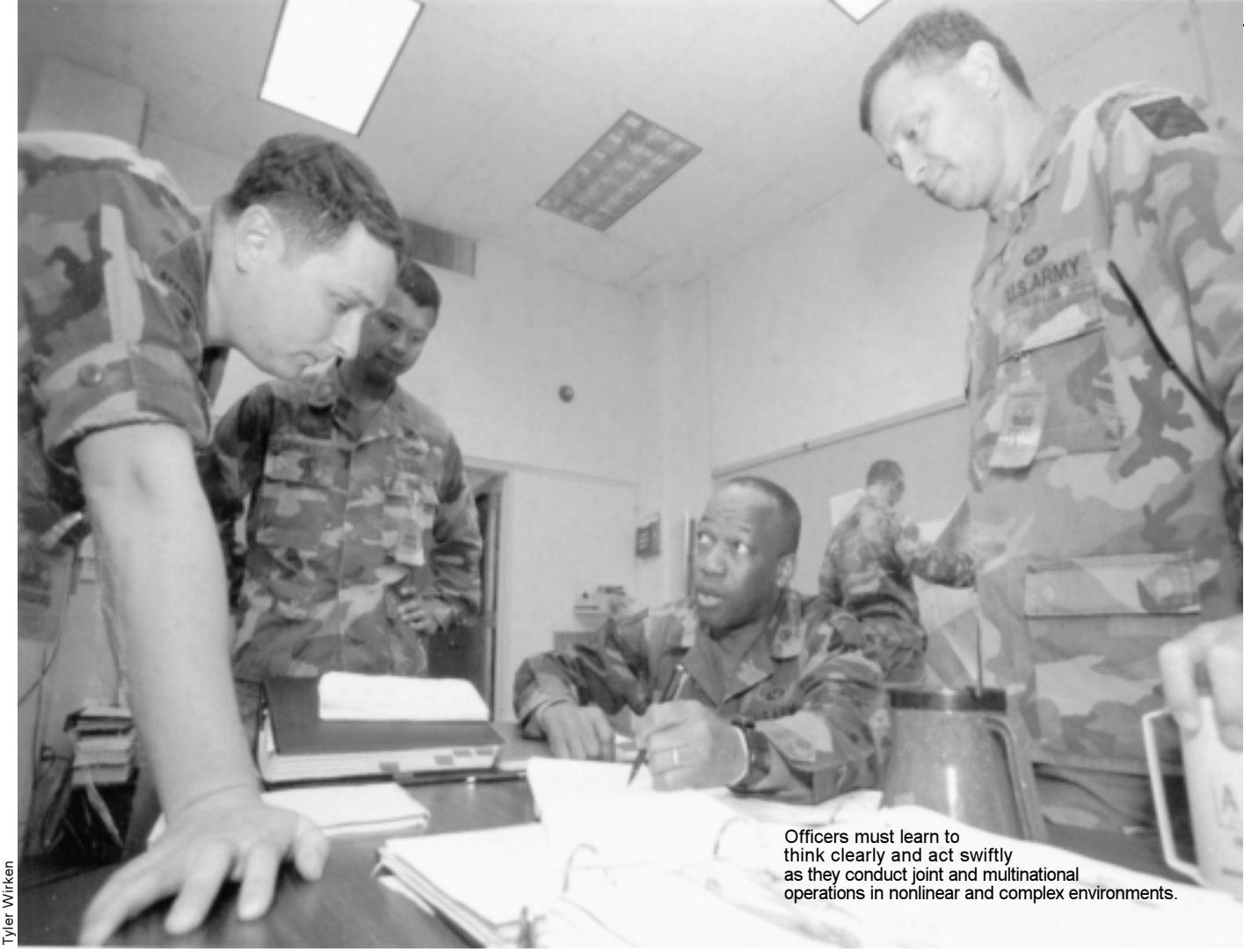
**Information operations is another element that has taken center stage in the annual training exercise as students learn to deal with hostile and aggressive media during interviews, briefings and in other role-playing scenarios.**

***Students translate objectives into a PA mission in support of the commander's intent, develop an operations and support concept and produce command messages that emphasize an operation's purpose. Other practical demonstrations assess the GIE's impact on the operation, assist in creating a comprehensive information strategy, anticipate media information needs, react to critical mission events and prepare for media interviews and briefings with timely, factual information.***

**Information superiority.** Leaders organize decision making around information and intelligence. Information superiority allows the possessor to craft information system capabilities to operational advantage in a conflict or to control the situation in operations short of war while denying those capabilities to the adversary. Commander's guidance considers the impact of preserving, degrading or destroying enemy information infrastructure. Rules of engagement temper the exploitation of these means in their effect on friendly forces, OPFOR and neutral systems. The relationship among adversaries, friendly forces and the environment requires thoughtful, knowledge-based decision making.

The commander and staff create temporary conditions with deliberate positioning of resources to validate the commander's critical information requirements (CCIR). Current information technology indicates the tempo in future operations will be more compressed in time. The commander visualizes his mission, including branches and sequels, and directs the precision and effects of collection and weapon systems. He increases the velocity of movements, maneuver and sustainment, and optimizes his ability to sustain and protect the force. Simultaneously, the commander focuses the effects of offensive and defensive information warfare to support decisive friendly force actions while disrupting or blocking the opposing commander's situational understanding.

**Public Affairs (PA) and the leader.** *PW* challenges students with complex issues in a global information environment (GIE). Students translate objectives into a PA mission in support of the commander's intent, develop an operations and support concept and produce command messages that emphasize an operation's purpose. Other practical demonstrations assess the GIE's impact on the operation, assist in creating a comprehensive information strategy, anticipate media information needs, react to critical mission events and prepare for media interviews and briefings with timely, factual information.




Officers must learn to think clearly and act swiftly as they conduct joint and multinational operations in nonlinear and complex environments.

Tyler Wirken

CGSOC students conduct corps, press center and division PA duties. The corps commander, his staff and division representatives provide daily situation update briefings and interviews to the role-playing media and PA personnel. Media coverage of the corps and simulated reporting from global and opposition news sources stimulate the staff to anticipate and react to both accurate and inaccurate reporting. Aggressive media representatives and unconfirmed allegations or incomplete information stress briefings and interviews during an ongoing mission.

PA contributes to maintaining a well-informed and supportive American and regional audience, coalition and global community. Educational themes include building a productive relationship among the media and PA teams and understanding the role of the media in our society as part of a professional media-military relationship.

**Humanitarian relief organizations (HROs).** HROs provided a significant improvement in mutual training effects during *PW 98*. A group of HRO representatives shared a wide range of real-world experiences and expertise. CGSOC officers and HRO representatives realized the training value of an emergency relief exercise within a military exercise. Serving as more than just subject-matter experts, HROs integrated quickly into the training audience. Both military and HRO participants developed a better awareness of each other's operational concepts, procedures and mutual support capabilities. After-action reviews confirmed a continuing HRO interest in the *PW* experience. Future exercises may include increased role-playing of indigenous local nongovernment

***Leader development in a 21st-century digital environment keynotes a major thrust of ongoing Leavenworth training and education. . . . "These captains and majors will constitute the strategic leadership of the Army After Next. We must start now to ensure they not only understand the capabilities that will be available to them, but they also develop the experience and expertise to leverage those capabilities."***

***Constructive simulations are powerful tools and the most effective means for training commanders and staffs of division and larger units. Training effectiveness improves through stressful training evaluated just as rigorously as a US Army Warfighter exercise. JTC and* SPECTRUM *simulations create a challenging simulation environment. Corps Battle Simulation provides a primary scenario simulation within the JTC.***

organizations (NGOs) and private volunteer organizations (PVOs) as well as HRO coordination among belligerent forces and a displaced populace, logistic support dilemmas in transportation and distribution, HRO representatives at press conferences and briefings, refugee camp administration and conflicts in military and HRO mission support priorities.

## Digitizing 21st-Century Leaders

*PW* demonstrates its essential role in the educational triad of institutional training, operational assignments and professional self-development. Applying force modernization capabilities, leaders gain expertise in leveraging these exponential improvements to mass the effects of combat power.[4] Officers learn to think clearly and act swiftly as they conduct and sustain joint and multinational operations in nonlinear and complex environments. Actions such as reception, staging, employment and recovery will often run concurrently. Speed, space and time are critical elements of dominating battlespace.

Operating in an arena of complex options and ambiguous conditions will require flexible and adaptive 21st-century leaders who direct and motivate with a mission focus. They clarify objectives and ensure understanding while building and motivating teams by personal example and practice. Visualizing success—training to an identified standard of performance, learning through informal and formal feedback systems and thinking about how to continually improve—is a matter of leader practice in making decisions. By doing so, leaders improve their ability to make timely decisions and communicate purpose, critical tasks and a desired end state. Leaders also motivate teams to achieve missions and intent in real-time practical exercises. Digitization provides the underpinning for CGSOC graduates' confidence in an execution-oriented method of how to think and act creatively. Educational effort emphasizes tactical and technical competence for staff duty at Army corps and division levels and applies Army warfighting doctrine in a joint and multinational environment at the tactical and operational levels of conflict. Because the Army is a learning organization, we have learned to succeed across the full range of conflict that may require military organizations and capabilities.[5]

**Warfighting readiness.** *PW* reinforces learning as an iterative application of skills in a realistic, stressful exercise supported by simulations. Officers solve leadership and decision-making issues during planning, preparation and conduct of operations with innovative, adaptive thinking. Thus, the Army's wartime goal is to apply overwhelming combat power against the enemy's decisive points and centers of gravity and, through swift, decisive action, destroy the enemy's will to resist.[6] Likewise, maintaining information (knowledge) superiority improves force protection and optimizes critical synchronization effects: movement, maneuver and precision fires, simultaneous attacks, velocity logistics, deception, tempo, prudent risk taking and initiative for decisive action.

**Joint Professional Military Education (JPME).** A critical catalyst of joint education leverages future technologies with creative, adaptive and flexible behavior. *Jointness* is the key. CGSC promotes the JPME

Tyler Wirken

An officer from the 5th German Panzer Grenadier Brigade updates retired General Frederick M. Franks Jr. on multinational operations during a recent *PW* exercise.

Phase I charter of an Army intermediate-level college (ILC). Officers develop the skills to optimize capabilities across service, interagency, nongovernment and multinational organizations. In addition to developing combined arms expertise, CGSC students study theater strategy and plans, national military strategy and national security strategy and policies.

The joint-oriented curricula for CGSOC emphasizes five major learning areas supported by multiple learning objectives:

- National military capabilities and command structure.
- Joint doctrine.
- Joint and multinational forces at the operational level of war.
- Joint planning and execution processes.
- Systems integration at the operational level of war.

Each *PW* learning objective relates those JPME learning areas and supporting tasks to a task, condition and standard. The CGSOC and JPME missions harmonize student understanding from a service component to a joint force perspective. Both missions rely on fundamental characteristics of leadership. Army Chief of Staff General Dennis J. Reimer emphasizes that "Leadership is about values, discipline and teamwork. . . . The Army's seven inherent values—loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage—are what make our profession different. . . . One of the great strengths of the US Army has been its unswerving commitment to soldiers—to knowing them, protecting them, teaching and mentoring them, understanding their concerns and truly caring for them."

***Commander's guidance considers the impact of preserving, degrading or destroying enemy information infrastructure. Rules of engagement temper the exploitation of these means in their effect on friendly forces, OPFOR and neutral systems. The relationship among adversaries, friendly forces and the environment requires thoughtful, knowledge-based decision making.***

***Future exercises may include increased role-playing of indigenous local nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and private volunteer organizations (PVOs) as well as humanitarian relief organization (HRO) coordination among belligerent forces and a displaced populace, logistic support dilemmas in transportation and distribution, HRO representatives at press conferences and briefings, refugee camp administration and conflicts in military and HRO mission support priorities.***

**Leader skills improvement.** Leader development and evaluation progresses through core curriculum courses to advanced application program electives in CGSOC. Throughout the academic year, officers receive continuous informal and formal evaluations and feedback of core course and advanced application program learning objectives. Faculty members coach and counsel planning, preparation and conduct of course requirements. Senior leaders within the college mentor the student class, and guest speakers provide insights for student self-assessment and improvement.

**The Leavenworth Sanction—a quality spiral.** Leader development in a 21st-century digital environment keynotes a major thrust of ongoing Leavenworth training and education. Reimer states, "The institutional training piece is absolutely essential if we are going to develop the leaders we need for the 21st century. That's why the recently completed *PRAIRIE WARRIOR* at Fort Leavenworth was important. These captains and majors will constitute the strategic leadership of the Army After Next. We must start now to ensure they not only understand the capabilities that will be available to them, but they also develop the experience and expertise to leverage those capabilities."

*PW* demonstrates an institutional charter to produce trained and ready leaders for the Army today and for the future. The purpose of the *PW* series in 1999 spotlights four main objectives:

- Educate leaders on an emerging digital decision-making process.
- Instill warfighting skills for future command and staff duties.
- Experience the challenges of full-spectrum complex operations.
- Understand joint and multinational attitudes, perspectives and force employment.

Other immediate positive impacts are a faculty, staff and student population exposed to digital command capabilities and potential. Although much attention centers on the AWE and digital testing in progress at Fort Hood, the entire US Army is in the process of digitization. CGSC provides a digital cohort of leaders for digitization in operational assignments throughout the Army. The US Army Combined Arms Center promotes Fort Leavenworth pioneering in technology-enhanced learning with digital libraries, joint simulations and joint military education. CGSC graduates know how to optimize the full capability of technology-assisted institutional knowledge.

Further, *PW* nurtures leadership and military decision making and exemplifies a century-long legacy of "Leavenworth graduate" excellence. Today, as in the past, these series of educational ventures challenge leaders to think about and plan for the future. The amalgamation of digital experiments, core-course and advanced elective college curricula guide a journey at Fort Leavenworth. *PW* engages the inspirational commitment of America's science, research, industry, education and military communities. Collective engagement will sustain the technological edge in superlative US combat power and the qualitative advantage of professionally educated, creative and adaptive Army leaders. ***MR***

---

**NOTES**

1. US Army Publication, *Leadership and Change in a Values-Based Army*, 2-4. Also, see US Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations (DCSOPS) Information Briefing, "Army Vision" (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Director for Operations, Readiness and Mobilization DCSOPS, 3 June 1998). Personnel tempo in the US Army increased 300 percent since 1989. To date, the last decade of the 20th century witnessed at least 29 major US Army de-

ployments. These operations include security assistance, domestic civil support, domestic disaster relief, peace making, peace building, nation assistance, peacekeeping, show of force, humanitarian assistance, noncombatant evacuation, peace enforcement, counterdrug and direct combat operations.

2. MAJ Fred Mohrman, US Army (Ret), interview with author on 6 August 1998. Mohrman is the US Army Command and General Staff College course author of the 1989 testbed capstone exercise. He recalls the genesis of the Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC) warfighter-like experience. Then BG Gordon R. Sullivan, CGSC deputy commandant, directed a feasibility study of developing a corps-level end-of-course exercise to capstone the 10-month CGSOC. Based on feedback from senior Army leaders in the field, a proof-of-principle concept emphasized the practical application of planning and preparation. Students executed tactical orders to appreciate time-distance factors, multiechelon combined arms operations and logistics support and key leader decision making of corps-level movements and maneuver. CGSC expanded the exercise to include ground maneuver and air warfare simulations, Corps Battle Simulation (CBS) and Air Warfare Simulation (AWSIM) and a robust observer-controller assessment group from the Battle Command Training Program (BCTP).

3. LTC Dennis K. Clark, US Army (Ret), interview with author on 13 August 1998. Clark is the USACGSC course author for *PRAIRIE WARRIOR* (*PW*) *91*. He recollects Army chief of staff (CSA) guidance to expand *PW* to include all CGSOC students in a warfighter-like capstone command post exercise. By 1991, CGSOC students in an elective course (A308) produced a corps operations order for use by a three-division corps in the titled *PW* capstone exercise. BCTP observer-controllers and senior observers shared lessons and insights from their warfighter experiences. Many students exercised command and staff duties in division and corps command posts, while other students learned practical functions in simulation work cells. *PW* prepared these future senior Army leaders, several hundred officers a year, to ponder an Army readiness vision and train with evolving force structure concepts for 21st-century warfare.

4. GEN Dennis J. Reimer, E-mail Subject: CSA 98-09 Random Thoughts While Running, 27 MAY 98 (POM 00-05), 27 May 1998, para 2.2. During a visit to *PW 98*, Reimer reflected on the educational excursions of officers in mental agility, prudent risk taking and timely decision making. "*PRAIRIE WARRIOR* provides these types of cognitive vignettes which expand the ability of leaders to exercise new technologies and to learn how to think with quantum improvements in situational understanding. Fused to a visualization of the full-spectrum environment, leaders can gain and maintain information dominance and achieve decisive results."

5. US Army Field Manual (FM) 100-1, *The Army* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 14 June 1994), Foreword.

6. Ibid., 41.

*Colonel Jon H. Moilanen is the chief of staff of Task Force Training, Leader Development and Soldier Support, and he is director of the Army's School for Command Preparation, US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He received a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh and an M.A. from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. He is a graduate of CGSC, the Logistics Executive Development Course of the Army's Logistic Management College and the US Army War College. He has served in a variety of command and staff positions in the Continental United States, Germany and Korea, to include director,* PRAIRIE WARRIOR *Planning Group, CGSC, Fort Leavenworth; commander, US Army Readiness Group-Snelling, Fort Snelling, Minnesota; commander, 2d Battalion, 72d Armor Regiment, 2d Infantry Division, Camp Casey, Korea; and senior tactics instructor, Tactical Commander's Development Course, School for Command Preparation, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He has published professional articles in* Armor, Infantry, Army Logistician *and* Military Review.

***Visualizing success—training to an identified standard of performance, learning through informal and formal feedback systems and thinking about how to continually improve—is a matter of leader practice in making decisions.***